

Kieffner for being selected as one of the Cincinnati Enquirer newspaper's Women of the Year.

The Enquirer has done well to bestow this honor on Ms. Kieffner. Among her many causes, she has done much for the St. Elizabeth Medical Center Foundation. She has also devoted herself to promoting breast health awareness and to raising funds for the Fischer Homes Breast Center. If that weren't enough, she is also active with the Redwood Rehabilitation Center, the American Cancer Society's Northern Kentucky chapter, United Ministries, and her church, Gloria Dei Lutheran.

Since The Enquirer's Women of the Year program was started in 1968, over 350 women in Greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky have been singled out for their efforts to improve the community for everyone.

Ms. Kieffner has certainly deserved this citation. As a Senator and a member of her community, I am proud of her dedication. Her accomplishments serve as an example to all citizens of the Commonwealth.●

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM A. COOPER

● Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I rise to extend my congratulations to Mr. William A. Cooper for long standing service as CEO at TCF Financial Corporation, a financial holding company based in Minnesota.

Bill Cooper came to TCF Financial in 1985 with an impressive financial leadership record which included serving as a senior auditor for Touche, Ross and company, a Detroit firm, and as President of Huntington Bank of Ohio.

But based on my personal relationship with Bill, I would say his high school graduating class might have voted him "least likely to become a banker." The banker's stereotype is reserved, cautious, and circumspect. Bill Cooper is bold, innovative, and refreshingly outspoken. Like his hero Ronald Reagan, there is never a bit of doubt as to where Bill Cooper stands.

During his tenure as CEO, Bill Cooper directed an impressive expansion of TCF Financial in Minnesota and elsewhere through his innovative leadership. From 1985 until his retirement in January, he helped to transform TCF Financial from a small banking enterprise into a thriving operation offering industry leading consumer services.

Bill Cooper is a complete citizen. He not only led a thriving business that provided thousands of jobs and financial services to a big proportion of our Minnesota population, Bill used his voice, his philanthropy, and his influence to improve as many sectors of our State as he could get his hands on.

His work on education not only shaped Minnesota public policy, his personal involvement changed the lives of hundreds of disadvantaged students forever. He has always had strong opinions and had the integrity to walk his talk.

Although Mr. Cooper has retired as CEO of TCF, he has not completely given himself up to the ski slopes or the golf courses as he continues to re-

main active in the financial world and in his community.

Minnesota has been fortunate to have a business leader like Mr. Cooper who not only has enriched the economy of Minnesota and elsewhere but has also used his good name, time, and money for the good of the community. Minnesota celebrates its lakes and farms and excellent community assets. One of the secrets of our success is community leaders like Bill Cooper who shoulder the burdens of leadership.

I congratulate Bill Cooper, the staff of TCF, and his family on his great career and leadership in the community.●

CELEBRATING THE 2006 BILL TALLMAN MEMORIAL WOMEN IN SCIENCE CONFERENCE

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I rise to recognize the Bill Tallman Memorial Women in Science Conference, which is taking place in five communities across South Dakota from March 6th through April 28th. Since 2002, the Women in Science Conference has helped to increase interest in science and technological careers among young women in my State. This year's conference is named in honor of the event's distinguished founder, Bill Tallman, who unexpectedly passed away last October while helping with recovery efforts for victims of the devastating hurricanes that hit the gulf coast region.

The cover of a recent Time magazine features a rather amusing photo of a child wearing a lab coat and oversized safety goggles, accompanied by the question, "Is America Flunking Science?" Though the image is meant to provoke a laugh, its associated question is anything but humorous. By a number of measures, our country is losing the competitive edge in scientific and technological fields that has for decades been a key driver of our economy. At a national level, one of the factors that undoubtedly contributes to this unfortunate trend is a failure to adequately engage young women in scientific pursuits. It is discouraging to think of how many important discoveries were never made because of our failure to cultivate young female researchers.

In my view, the Women in Science Conference in South Dakota is a shining example of what we as a nation need more of to retain and enhance our superiority in science and technology. The conference provides young women in South Dakota with first-hand exposure to women who are leading important scientific work. These distinguished individuals share the rewards and challenges of their work in vivid, concrete terms, and serve as role models for young women who may not have previously considered a career in science.

The Women in Science Conference is a product of a partnership between several forward-thinking entities, including the National Weather Service, and several nonprofit and private-sector sponsors. Without their contributions,

this valuable event would not be possible.

It is a fitting tribute to Bill Tallman that this year's event should be named in his honor. Bill not only recognized the need for an important event like this, he actually made it happen. I know it was one of his proudest achievements, and I congratulate everyone who participates in the Women in Science Conference for helping to carry on his vision. Bill began his career by engaging young minds as a high school math teacher, and then served his country during a 20-year career as a meteorologist with the U.S. Air Force. Next he joined the National Weather Service, and was eventually asked to lead its Aberdeen, SD, office. At a time of national tragedy, few were surprised at Bill's willingness to serve again by leaving home to help those who had suffered through the devastating hurricanes that hit the gulf coast in 2005.

Bill Tallman's presence will be sorely missed by all the people whose lives he touched. It is my distinct pleasure to honor his life and legacy by recognizing the Bill Tallman Memorial Women in Science Conference today in the Senate.●

MRS. PRANKE'S SIXTH GRADE

● Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize a special group of students. It is not often enough that we have the opportunity to acknowledge heartwarming acts of kindness, but the actions of Mrs. Pranke's sixth grade class in Sheyenne, ND, have touched my hearts and the heart of their neighbors and friends.

Throughout their years together, this special group of students has worked on more than one occasion to serve their community. As third graders, they collected box tops to purchase new games for schoolmates. When they were in the fifth grade, they initiated a fundraiser and donated the proceeds to benefit the Ronald McDonald House in Fargo, ND.

As one final project, Mrs. Pranke's sixth graders decided to treat themselves to a class trip to celebrate their years together before moving on to junior high school.

The students began holding fundraisers for their trip. Shortly after all the funds had been raised, they learned that the father of one of their classmates had fallen critically ill. The students quickly realized that they were faced with unique circumstances. After learning of their classmate's situation and the medical costs the family would bear, the children chose to donate the funds to their classmate's family and forgo their class trip.

By choosing to help with their hard-earned money rather than keep it for themselves, these extraordinary students proved that their hearts are deep and their love for one another is real.

Again, I commend Mrs. Pranke's exceptional group of sixth graders. Their